

# THE FALL



## Critical & Cultural Analysis

Text by Verónica Mota

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## The Serie

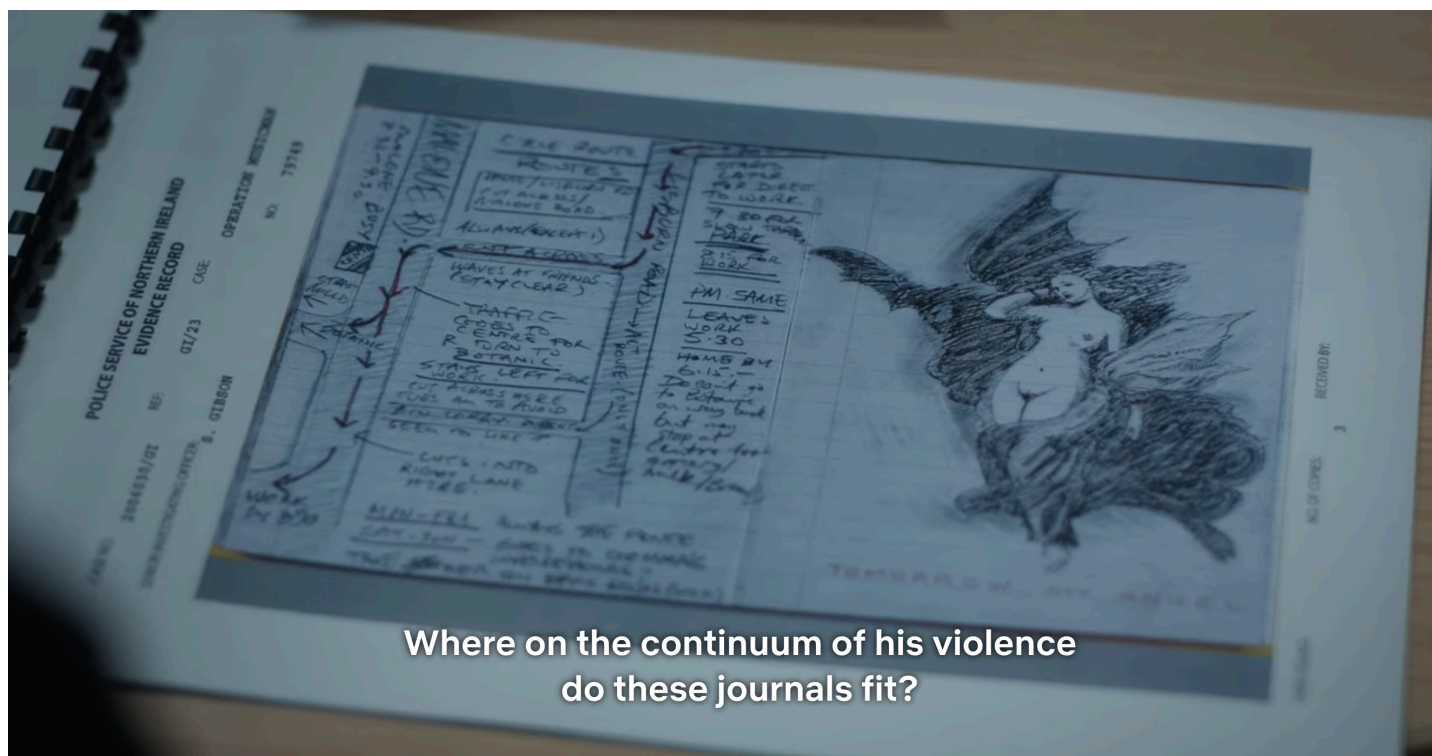
The Fall is a criminal series created and written by Allan Cubitt and released in 2013. This psychological thriller is led by the excellent actress from X-Files Gillian Anderson who plays the role of a female detective superintendent hunting a middle aged good looking serial killer in the context of Belfast, Ireland. He kills young, independent and successful women. The murders have a huge amount of sadism and a strong dose of sexual deviance.

The killer role is wonderfully performed by Jamie Dornan who plays a man living a double life: the life of a married man and good father of two children who is socially involved doing voluntary social work & the man with a turbulent resentment towards women because of the sexual intercourse his mother had with an unknown man who left her pregnant (his father) and due to her suicide when he was very young.



In his world his mother was inherently immoral for having sex outside marriage & being a single mother. A very conservative view coming out of his religious context.

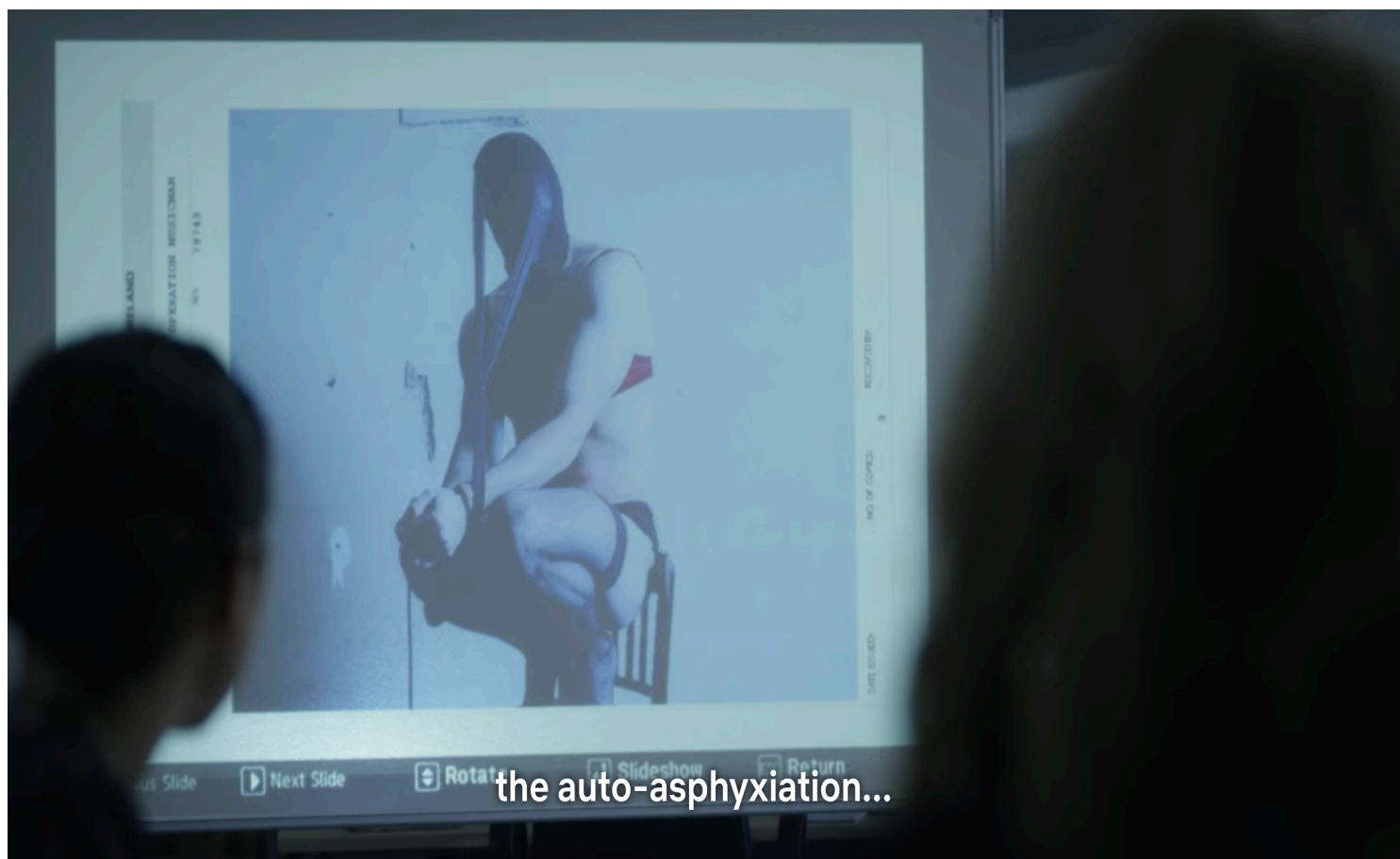
The most dark side of Paul Inspector sees women as sexual fetish toys. He makes them his objects. He tortures and kills strangling them to death. He acts with certain precision and takes their lives in very slow tempo. He enjoys taking his time. Spector sees himself as a creator, as a Nietzschean *Übermensch* in the worst and crooked interpretation possible.



Where on the continuum of his violence  
do these journals fit?

We follow the narrative of a God that can create and take life away with total brutality. He feeds his male ego with this deadly power. All his serial killings are enjoyed and kept as trophies in physical format. He collects intimate clothing from his victims & draws them in submissive and aesthetic erotic positions. He loves dressing up in bondage using their bras, underwear, shoes and leggings.





He performs auto-asphyxiation as an important practice of his deviant sexual behaviours. He values visual material as well as objects including a beloved female mannequin he carefully dresses up. He also enjoys recreating creatively his murders in order to get that powerful & fetish sexual high. He can not stop. In fact, he only keeps getting better at killing. He operates like a junkie who needs to feed his addiction, targeting and murdering women again and again. His heroin is to practice aberrant sexual murders. He practices voyeurism, writes text, does drawings and collages, takes aesthetic and erotic pictures of his victims and himself, takes souvenirs, makes videos and gets strong sexual pleasure out of his "works". He is a macabre artist specialised in misogyny expressed as sexually motivated murders with a strong strangulation touch. This is his art.



Paul Inspector has only one weakness: pregnant women. Here we experience a criticism of a double moral he holds. He kills women but feels a certain remorse when they are pregnant because he, as a father himself, loves his children. Paradoxically the love of his life is his daughter who loves & adores him. In addition, he believes that pregnant women ruin the perfection of his work.



## **The fight against misogyny**

*The Fall* tells the story of a strong independent woman, a detective, hunting this serial killer. It is an anti-misogynist tale with a woman in the main role looking for justice. Stella Gibson has certain men & women, including a lesbian cop, backing her up on her hunting. A middle aged woman, single, with a very sharp intelligence and a strong force. She is portrayed as a pansexual and as a sexual liberated British character.

Gibson has sexual encounters with work colleagues and is morally judged in different levels only because she is woman. This series constantly challenges our sexist ethical values and exposes the hypocrisy of men living in a double standard morality strongly established in a patriarchal Christian society. The plot is complex and it certainly does its job. From the main story of a serial killer hunter to the different levels of psychological horror including the realistic and brilliant portrait of toxic masculinity.



We see patriarchy and gender based violence in a catholic context where politicians book sex female workers to foreign powerful men who brutally abused them in their sex & drugs private parties, violent outlaws who practice domestic violence and men within the police force who can not take a no for an answer. Gender based violence is experienced in all the ladder. From the streets to the top.



## The catholic Church

A very important and unexpected twist in the story is when the audience realised that the serial killer was not only traumatized in his childhood but how he was sent to a children's home after the suicide of his mother. Her abandonment made him walk alone in life as a young man having to live under the protection of the catholic church.

Detective Gibson's first has the intuition on how this divergent murder might be killing out of the traumatic experience by the loss of his mother. This is the first thesis she tries to nail in the case as an anthropological explanation. She first thinks there is a huge anger towards his mother for leaving him alone in this world. From there he might have developed a sadistic & violent tendency against women making them his objects of desire, anger and revenge.



The story develops and we find out that the priest who took him under his protection is an important spiritual leader who is in jail for serial sexual abuse. The narrative of the tale focuses also on how the catholic church has taken under its protection young boys like Paul Inspector led by paedophilic priests who commit sexual assaults towards this type of vulnerable children & young men. Inspector is one of them.



The priest who abused him is alive and paying a social debt with a long sentence in jail. We see the priest once on the screen because the police are after investigations trying to dig deeper into Spector's biography to find a better picture of the killer. The catholic pastor is presented as a very cynical character with no remorse. This preacher turns out to be the evil mentor behind our serial killer Paul Inspector. The churchman raped many children in the name of God.

He slept with them, touched them, sucked his intimate parts, etc. He showed this boy the meaning of deviant sex. What can be more rogue than a Catholic priest trusted by his community having access to homeless young boys and using them as his sexual objects? What can be more aberrant than using a powerful position and getting constantly fresh new blood? Paul Inspector was his favourite. Intelligent, handsome and a fast learner who helped him with his sexual games. This priest is the main mentor behind a serial killer who brutally strangles women at their homes.

The plot continues giving a lot of adrenaline and psychological horror until the very end of the story. Stella Gibson & Paul Inspector battle against each other. She fights for justice in the name of his dead victims and for the protection of other women. He, instead, fights for his sadistic and digressive pleasures. He tortures women, including detective Stella as the symbol of powerful femininity.





## **The historical reflection behind the plot.**

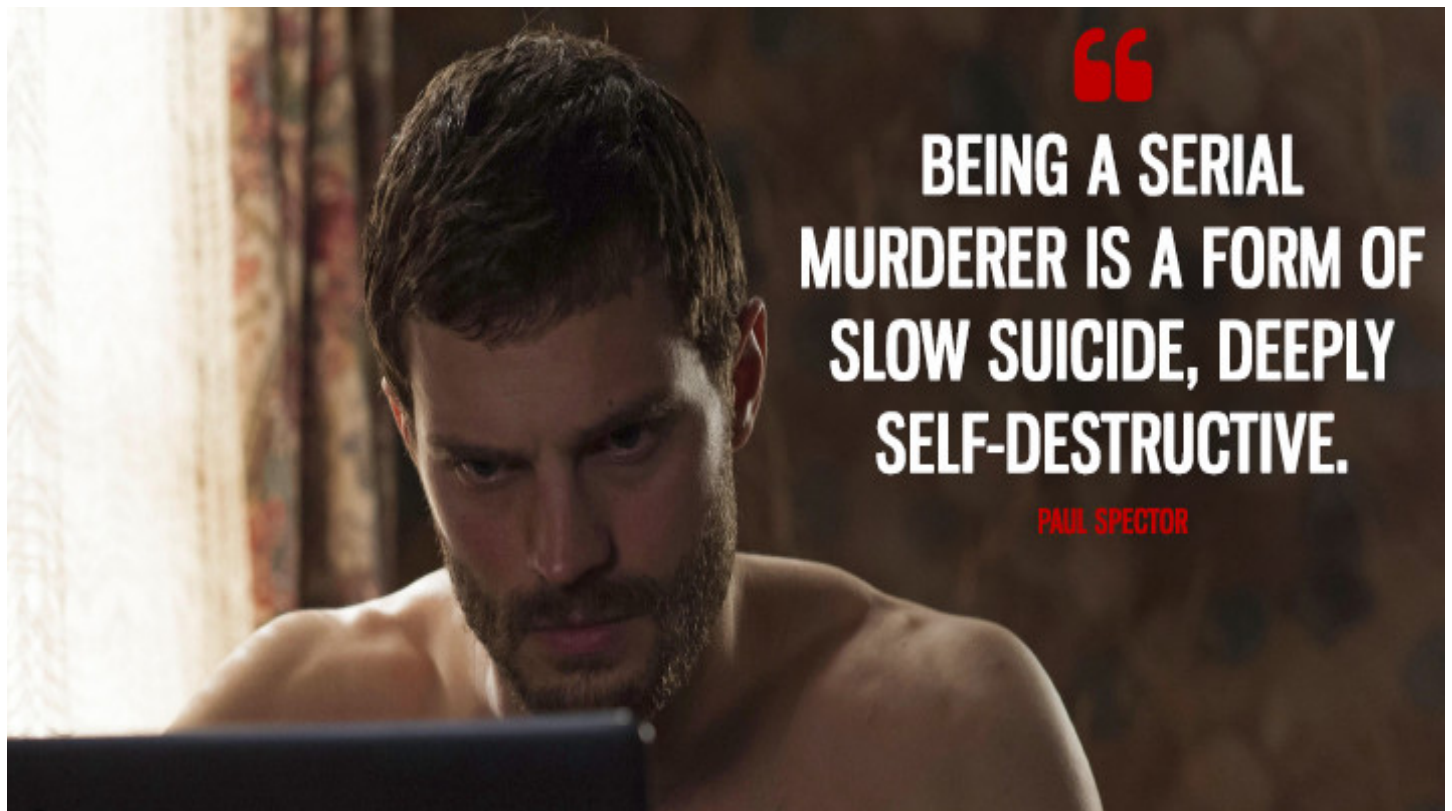
The Irish singer Sinead O'Connor became famously controversial after that Saturday Night Live appearance in 1992, when she tore up a picture of the Pope during a performance of Bob Marley's *War*. At the time this was a public Molotov. This action brought back to her the still practiced patriarchal phenomena known as *Witch hunting* and/or *Witch burning*. Thousands of people detested her and she was harshly stigmatized as pathologically insane. Her voice saying "Fight the real enemy", the church, was shouted openly on television and it was completely misread in the form of a shocking act of blasphemy. That shout observed by millions on camera was a radical protest against the covering up of child sexual abuse by the Catholic Church. What came back was total denial. Religious people were not ready for the painful truth and burned out "the witch". Three decades later it turns out that she was absolutely right. The Catholic church has a lot of blood on its hands. There is a huge amount of sexual victims & survivors worldwide.



Only in Germany there are testimonies of sexual abuse between 1946 and 2019. Just in Berlin more than 120 victims and in whole Germany 3,677 victims by at least 1,670 priests and religious people (*Die Zeit*, 29.01.2021). The number of victims gets ridiculously high if you check on cases in Latin America or other countries in Europe and Africa. Sexual Predators are an important part of the church. The number is shocking. Between 1977 to 2019 Benedict XVI Pope and other clericals denied all cases.

There has been a huge amount of trauma & frustration since the church has not provided any justice for the victims which has turned the church into a place of shame and total devastation for the people with spiritual faith. Today a new wave of legal forces are putting pressure since we can talk about serial sexual abuse happening for decades worldwide. The problem is real & structural.





## **What needs to be done**

*The Fall* tells the story of serial emotional, physical and spiritual murders. It portrays historical facts such as gender based violence and sexual abuse within the church. It also reveals how the Catholic church, as religious and powerful institution, has affected tremendously our understanding of womanhood, how it has spread toxic masculinity & how relevant it is to fight for change & justice.

The fight Stella Gibson begins against Paul Inspector is a contemporary battle thousands of victims of sexual offenders need to start. It is a call for re-thinking our ethical, moral and social values as well as our religious views. An apology is not enough. All perpetrators need to pay for their crimes and all victims deserve justice.